

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 03544 282045Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
-----010511 078385 /15

R 281520Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2224
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

S E C R E T CAIRO 3544

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR ET
SUBJ: EXPECTED DEFECTION OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR ATO GETACHEW
MEKASHA

1. WE UNDERSTAND ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR ATO GETACHEW
MEKASHA PLANS TO DEFECT AND TAKE A JOB IN PASADENA,
CALIFORNIA. WE DO NOT KNOW NATURE OF JOB. MEKASHA'S
CHILDREN ARE ALREADY AT SCHOOL IN PASADENA. HIS
WIFE HAS JUST RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO THE US.
2. WE ARE TOLD MEKASHA WAS AT ONE TIME A MINISTER IN
HAILE SALASSIE PERIOD, BUT MANAGED SURVIVE REVOLUTION
THROUGH A FLUKE. DURING STUDENT RIOTS WHICH TOOK PLACE
IN HAILE SALASSIE PERIOD, HE REPORTEDLY ENGAGED IN
DIALOGUE WITH STUDENTS AND WAS SEVERLY REPRIMANDED BY
THE LATE EMPEROR FOR DOING SO. HE WAS SENT AS AMBASSADOR
TO DELHI AS PUNISHMENT. THUS, WHEN REVOLUTION TOOK
PLACE, HE WAS APPARENTLY CONSIDERED BY EPMG AS
ACCEPTABLE AND NAMED AS AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT.
3. ALTHOUGH HE HAS GENERALLY KEPT HIS VIEWS TO
HIMSELF, A FEW CLOSE DIPLOMATIC ASSOCIATES WHOM HE
HAS KNOWN FOR MANY YEARS, STATE HE IS DEEPLY DISTRAUGHT

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OVER WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN ETHIOPIA. MANY OF THOSE
KILLED WERE PERSONAL FRIENDS. HE HAS NOW HEARD THAT,
IN WAKE OF RECENT EXECUTIONS, MENGISTU HAS ORDERED THAT
AN INVESTIGATION BE MADE OF THE RELIABILITY
OF ALL AMBASSADORS. THIS WOULD PRESUMABLY INCLUDE
HIM. WHILE MEKASHA HAS SAID NOTHING TO US, WE ARE
RELIABLY INFORMED THAT HE PLANS TO FIND SOME WAY TO

AVOID PARTICIPATION IN THE UPCOMING OAU MEETING. AS
SOON AS HE CAN, PERHAPS SOMETIME IN MARCH, HE
ALLEGEDLY INTENDS SIMPLY TO RESIGN HIS POSITION AND
LEAVE AT ONCE FOR THE US.

4. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW IF MEKASHA INTENDS TO
ASK FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. ON CONTINGENCY BASIS, WOULD
APPRECIATE DEPT'S GUIDANCE AS TO WHETHER ASYLUM WOULD
BE GRANTED HIM IF HE SHOULD REQUEST IT. EMBASSY ADDIS
ABABA MAY WISH COMMENT.
EILTS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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